USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**WITH NO ENDS IN IRAQ, A WAY AHEAD**

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## Report Documentation Page

| 1. REPORT DATE | 2. REPORT TYPE | 3. DATES COVERED |
|---|---|---|
| **30 MAR 2007** | **Strategy Research Project** | **00-00-2006 to 00-00-2007** |

| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER |
|---|---|
| **With No Ends in Iraq, A Way Ahead** | 5b. GRANT NUMBER |
| | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER |

| 6. AUTHOR(S) | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER |
|---|---|
| **Catherine Patterson** | 5e. TASK NUMBER |
| | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER |

| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER |
|---|---|
| **U.S. Army War College,Carlisle Barracks,Carlisle,PA,17013-5050** | |

| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) |
|---|---|
| | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) |

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

**Approved for public release; distribution unlimited**

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

**See attached.**

15. SUBJECT TERMS

| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. REPORT | b. ABSTRACT | c. THIS PAGE | | **22** | |
| **unclassified** | **unclassified** | **unclassified** | | | |

# ABSTRACT

AUTHOR:         Lieutenant Colonel Catherine Patterson

TITLE:          With No Ends in Iraq, a Way Ahead

FORMAT:         Strategy Research Project

DATE:           09 March 2007       WORD COUNT:  5406       PAGES: 22

KEY TERMS:      Strategy, Middle East, Democratization, Stability

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified


Although there were few national or international misgivings about the U.S. action against Afghanistan, there was widespread opposition and uncertainty with the invasion of Iraq.  The connection to the 9/11 terrorist attacks was more tenuous, the rationale justifying the war more contentious, and the strategic and operational requirements more complex.  Notwithstanding, the U.S. attacked Iraq without significant international support, insufficient military and interagency resources, an incomplete operational concept, and a misguided military strategy based upon questionable justification.

As the justification for invading Iraq unraveled, four distinct objectives surfaced and faded as the Administration struggled to adapt to the dynamic Iraqi environment.  The impact on the U.S. military has been profound.  If there is any chance of succeeding in Iraq, there must be a clearly defined exit strategy and end-state.  That end-state should match what is feasible within the current constraints on the means and our ability to pursue the necessary ways.

This paper examines the basic theoretical elements of strategy, compares them with what was developed for Iraq, assesses the established objectives of the strategy and the associated high risk tasks, and proposes a framework for future strategic engagement in Iraq and the broader Middle East.

## WITH NO ENDS IN IRAQ, A WAY AHEAD

After 9/11, there was little opposition, nationally or internationally, against the U.S. decision to invade Afghanistan. It was understood that al Qa'ida had trained in that country and was responsible for the attacks in New York City, Washington D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The purpose was clear – eliminate the most effective and complex training grounds of the worldwide al Qa'ida terrorist networks.

Conversely, for the war with Iraq, the connection to the 9/11 terrorist attacks was more tenuous, the rationale more contentious, and the strategic and operational requirements much more complex. Seemingly blinded by the low-cost, resource-limited, and overwhelmingly successful approach taken in Afghanistan, the U.S. attacked Iraq without significant international support, insufficient military and interagency resources, an incomplete operational concept, and a misguided, if not flawed, military strategy. Following the rather short, albeit predictably, successful maneuver phase, the negative consequences of these initial operational and strategic miscalculations have continued to grow. Without an adequately resourced and competent central authority to establish civil control and hampered by a military un-schooled in stability operations and culturally indoctrinated against assuming governance roles, law and order within Iraq quickly deteriorated. The resultant ineffective kinetic military operations and incoherent political activities fractured the fragile Iraqi social fabric and created an environment that has fostered and fomented ethnic and religious strife and fueled the nascent insurgency. Outright civil war looms. Some argue it has already begun.

The Iraqi volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous strategic and operational environments have proven a strategic dilemma. As the justification for invading Iraq has unraveled over the last four years, four distinct objectives have surfaced and faded as the Administration struggles to adapt to the dynamic Iraqi environment. The impact on the U.S. military has been profound. How does a military go about formulating a consistent campaign when the strategy is both unclear and continuously changing? How are priorities established and missions accomplished for un-resourced or non-doctrinal mission areas such as the prevention of looting, administering justice (establishing the rule of law),[1] securing borders and weapons caches, training police and public administration? This paper examines the basic theoretical elements of strategy, compares them with what was developed for Iraq, assesses the established objectives of the strategy and associated high risk tasks, and proposes a framework for future strategic engagement in Iraq and the broader Middle East.

<u>Basic Theoretical Elements of Strategy</u>

First, defining what is meant by strategy is necessary in order to assess the adequacy of the U.S. strategic plan and to develop possible recommendations for its improvement. Clausewitz defined strategy as "the use of engagements for the object of war."[2] He also stated that, "The original means of strategy is victory – that is, tactical success; its ends, in the final analysis, are those objects which will lead directly to peace. The application of these means for these ends will also be attended by factors that will influence it to a greater or lesser degree."[3] The ideas of strategy underscore the criticality of articulating the objective against which the ways and means will be applied. Without such a construct and an attendant rigorous analysis, a logical movement to military victory would be impossible.

A modern military theorist, Liddell Hart, astutely pointed out that in Clausewitz's model, "One defect of this definition is that it intrudes on the sphere of policy, or the higher conduct of the war, which must necessarily be the responsibility of the government and not of the military leaders it employs as its agents in the executive control of operations. Another defect is that it narrows the meaning of 'strategy' to the pure utilization of battle, thus conveying the idea that battle is the only means to the strategic[al] [sic] end. It was an easy step for Clausewitz's less profound disciples to confuse the means with the end, and to reach the conclusion that in war every other consideration should be subordinated to the aim of fighting a decisive battle."[4] By this analysis, it is therefore the express responsibility of the government to determine the objective of the war, and the means by which to achieve it should not, at least in modern times, be limited solely to a military option. Such is the case in Iraq. Success will be determined by a function of activities in areas other than the military realm. In other words, the means must include every avenue, to include diplomatic, informational, and economic, among others, required to reach strategic objectives. For the case in Iraq in 2007, Liddell's philosophy of "achieving a better peace"[5] may even be optimistic. Success may have to be defined in terms more appropriate to achieving a minimal acceptable level of regional stability and a moderate, relatively non-aggressive Iraqi national character. This could even include acceptance of a strong but non-democratically elected leader who is able to ensure a minimum level of stability.

<u>Changing Objectives to Guide Strategy</u>

Now that the strategic ends and means to reach them have been defined on a basic level of military theory, the paper will assess the four morphing objectives that the Bush Administration used to justify its invasion of Iraq and guide its activities since March of 2003.

The first objective, which was aimed at preventing coordinated Iraqi-al Qa'ida operations, implied that there was a clear operational relationship between al Qa'ida and Saddam Hussein. Although the Vice President stated on a number of occasions that there was such a connection and arguments were initially made for such a connection, there was not enough evidence of a connection to make the argument credible.[6]  Therefore, the connection could not be linked, and the objective of preventing an Iraqi and al Qa'ida operational relationship, or any other relationship for that matter between the two entities, did not last.  Louise Richardson, a highly respected expert on Terrorism and professor at Harvard, argues that the "post-9/11 period was the conflation of two very distinct security issues:  the threat from al-Qa'ida and the threat from Saddam Hussein."[7]  She goes on to write that, "Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, in particular, pushed hard for attacking Iraq right away.  In a memo dated September 17 [2002], he argued that if there were even a 10 percent chance that Saddam Hussein had been behind the 9/11 attacks, maximum priority should be placed on eliminating that threat.  He also argued that the odds in fact were far greater than one in ten."[8]  After the invasion, without any evidence of a mature symbiotic relationship between Saddam and al Qa'ida, it was quietly dropped in the halls of both the Pentagon and White House.[9]  Even the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE)[10] of 2002 did not address the supposed link between Saddam and al Qa'ida, nor did Tenet's defense of the NIE in 2003.  The documents focused solely on the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) issue and how the Intelligence Community drew its conclusions.[11]

The second objective, the elimination of Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction capability, is the one most remembered, mainly because it was emphasized as the objective when stability operations began to go badly immediately after the maneuver phase ended.  This objective was used to justify the invasion because of the potential threat of Iraq employing WMD covertly or overtly against the U.S.  The pre-Desert Storm chemical attack on the Kurds nearly two decades before provided additional substantiation for this assertion, though that information was dated.  Notwithstanding, the Intelligence Community pursued this issue for the next years, committing important but scarce resources attempting to uncover any evidence whatsoever that would confirm this rationale.[12]  No such weapons indicating an active WMD program or representing "warm start up capability" was ever found.

The WMD argument was particularly important to Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, who stated in Vanity Fair, "The truth is that for reasons that have a lot to do with the U.S. government bureaucracy, we settled on the one issue that everyone could agree on, which was weapons of mass destruction as the core reason, but there have always been three fundamental concerns.  One is weapons of mass destruction, the second is support for

terrorism, the third is the criminal treatment of the Iraqi people.  Actually I guess you could say there's a fourth overriding one which is the connection between the first two."[13]

The absence of WMD proved particularly embarrassing for a variety of reasons.  First, it was addressed in the President's State of the Union address as the reason that the United States was obligated to act against Iraq.[14]  Second, it was the primary rationale Colin Powell used when testifying before the United Nations on February 5th, 2003 when making a compelling argument for the invasion of Iraq;[15] testimony that relied on intelligence that later proved to be inaccurate for reasons debated still today.[16]  Third, and in spite of grave misgivings by the French and U.N. weapons inspectors, the U.S. used the likely presence of WMD stockpiles in Iraq as the justification for ongoing U.S. military action and the occupation of Iraq.

The third objective, that of ousting the Saddam Regime, was predicated on Saddam's crimes against humanity; most notably in the form of a chemical attack ordered by Saddam against the Kurdish minority in his country.  However, this humanitarian-based objective spanned a broad area of known human rights abuses committed by Saddam's regime.  The counter-argument to this objective was that there were many other nefarious leaders in other parts of the world committing heinous crimes against humanity that had not spurred U.S. intervention.  It is possible that the Administration was attempting to garner support from domestic and international actors who traditionally opposed the previous rationales.  As Professor Richardson points out, this argument appealed to liberals, "especially those who felt that the West had unconscionably stood by and done nothing to stop genocide in Rwanda years before."[17]  The rationale was further reiterated in the President's opening memorandum in the National Security Strategy that stated, "We led an international coalition to topple the dictator of Iraq, who had brutalized his own people, terrorized the region, defied the international community, and sought and used weapons of mass destruction."[18]  Nevertheless, as people began to disagree with the continued intervention in Iraq, perhaps because of the growing insurgency, deteriorating security situation, and mounting burden in terms of casualties and expenditures, the "assurance of human rights" began to loose public support.  As a response, the Administration shifted its focus to a new justification.

A fourth objective emerged as the leading rationale – to establish freedom and democracy within a stable Iraq as an example for the broader Middle East.  Interestingly, this is in direct contradiction to the recognition in the National Security Strategy that a democracy cannot be created through imposition by external influence.  Although the idea of encouraging and supporting the creation of free democratic societies runs throughout the National Security Strategy (NSS), there is also conflicting interventionist language in the same document.  In the

"Way Ahead" section of the document, it states, "To protect our Nation and honor our values, the United States seeks to extend freedom across the globe by leading an international effort to end tyranny and to promote effective democracy."[19]  The words "to extend freedom" and "to end tyranny" imply, and in a not-so nuanced way, an interventionist strategy.  This ambiguity subverts efforts to use the NSS as a guide for U.S. policy and strategic engagements.

The idea that this country should export democracy may be a noble one but as the NSS accurately states, "freedom cannot be imposed; it must be chosen."[20]  These words were echoed by a United Nations official from South Africa when he stated, based on his experience with the elimination of Apartheid in his own country, that "Democracy must be created from within."[21]  Notwithstanding, there are recognized benefits for encouraging and advocating democracy.  Bruce Russett states that democracies are "democratically organized political systems in general and operate under restraints that make them more peaceful in their relations with other democracies."[22]  Later he states that, "For a democracy to survive its inception and thrive, there must also be stability or longevity."[23]  Likewise, Huntington wrote that stability and its institutionalization is a "central dimension in the analysis of any political system," and that it takes three years to cement.[24]  In other words, it is recognized that democracies in the world order are generally ideal in that they tend to not fight with other democracies; however, the growing pains in the beginning are extraordinarily difficult and most times violent, which makes successful establishment problematic and high risk.   It is reasonable to expect that, after much research into historical examples of the democratization of institutions, there will be a period of great unease and strife and that efforts will be largely immune to external U.S. influence, regardless of our good intentions.[25]  The clear message is that freedom cannot be imposed; yet this is precisely what the U.S. is pursuing, both by force of arms, with its continued presence and operations in Iraq, and with its political rhetoric.

The imposition of democracy in tyrannical societies with generally weak institutions is an almost impossible task with few historical examples of success.[26]  Russett poses the following relevant questions:  "by what principles can democracy best be advanced in a world of nationalism and ethnic hatred?  What are the prudent possibilities for intervention – whether by economic means or by military force – to promote democracy."[27]  The complexity of "democratization" was not given serious planning consideration in the months leading up to the Iraq invasion, much less when taking into account the cultural complexities of that country or even in the broader Middle East.  The overriding assumption by the U.S. was that there would be no need for post-war stability operations, since we would be greeted as liberators, not invaders.[28]  Additionally, the Administration planned that an interim Iraqi government would be

formed from a cadre of intellectual elite exiles and they would assume responsibility for internal governance and eventual democratization.[29] Therefore, planning stability operations was considered superfluous with little or no serious consideration given to the possible consequences should these assumptions prove invalid. The corresponding delays in establishing effective Iraqi self-governance has de-facto injected a foreign power and an alien presence within Iraq that has caused negative social, religious, and cultural repercussions, most acting at cross purposes to the establishment of democracy.[30]

It is worth noting that in January 2003, two months before the invasion, the National Intelligence Council, a CIA-led panel of Intelligence Community specialists, cautioned that building democracy in Iraq would "be difficult because of its authoritarian history and warned of the risk that the American forces would be seen as occupiers," and that "quick restoration of services would be important to maintain the support of the Iraqi public."[31] These warnings were left unheeded.

As argued in the foregoing paragraphs, democratic institutions must be grown from within, tempered and shaped by internal cultural and social norms, while being slowly nurtured through the encouragement of corresponding political freedoms, economic prosperity, improved education systems, and widespread dissemination of information of increasing fidelity. With the current U.S. Administration, what is being attempted is increasingly recognized as flawed. However, now that we have "broken it," as Colin Powell so simply and eloquently stated, "we own it."[32] And if we do not fix it or assist in rebuilding it on some scale, as Mr. Henry Kissinger pointed out in an interview on the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC), "A dramatic collapse of Iraq – whatever we think about how the situation was created – would have disastrous consequences for which we would pay for many years and which would bring us back, one way or another, into the region."[33]

So the fourth objective is where the United States military currently finds itself conducting operations - to embed and cultivate democratic institutions and stabilize Iraq. The U.S. has modified this objective to the following - to establish a relatively stable and democratic Iraq that will be politically moderate to a greater or lesser degree, oppose terrorism, and be a responsible national actor. Progress is elusive. Success has been hampered by a series of previously outlined strategic miscalculations and ultimately the infeasibility and unsustainability of the mission. Moreover, the corresponding measures pursued by military and other interagency actors within Iraq have detracted from mission success. Simply put, the operational and strategic environments changed faster than the military and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) could adapt to. As objectives changed, the ends became incongruous with the ongoing

ways and means the U.S. was employing, which were almost exclusively military. The inability to define a viable objective was aggravated by a U.S. military virtually untrained, culturally averse, and ill-equipped for stability operations. At the risk of over-simplifying a very complex social-military phenomenon, the knocking down of doors, upturning of people's households, making mass arrests, and killing supposed insurgents with corresponding collateral damage and casualties does little good if it simultaneously alienates the population and creates more insurgents.[34] In effect, the U.S. military's predisposition toward conventional military operations did little to clearly distinguish insurgents from the populace, much less win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. At the same time, reconstruction efforts became more difficult and expensive as the security environment continued to deteriorate.

Only in 2005 was the DoD Directive published establishing a defense policy that put on a par the priority for the military to be prepared to conduct stabilization operations – this being two years after stability operations officially began. The policy stated that "Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support. They shall be given priority comparable to combat operations and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DoD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities and planning."[35] The absence of preparedness for these sorts of operations is tragic considering the military had done so well after WWII in the momentous development and implementation of the Marshall Plan, arguably the greatest reconstruction operation in military, and perhaps, world history.[36]

Complicating the inherent tendency of the U.S. military toward purely kinetic solutions to Security, Stability, Transition and Reconstruction (SSTR) problems was the disjointed planning for Phase IV post-conflict operations.[37] Had a viable and resourced approach to post-conflict governance and stability operations been formulated and disseminated, even a military predisposed toward kinetic operations might have been able to successfully transition to these roles. Unfortunately, post-conflict planning was based on a wide range of what proved to be erroneous assumptions and was mostly abbreviated, under-resourced, and not disseminated to or understood at the tactical level.[38] For the soldiers and leaders at Corps and below - those responsible for the actual execution of the tasks - Phase IV planning was essentially non-existent.[39]

High-Risk Mission Areas – Causes of Failure & Keys to Success

The Administration appointed retired LTG Jay Garner, under Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, to run post-war Iraq just eight weeks before the war began without a plan or enough

resources for the task.[40]  The first unmet security challenge faced by Garner and the ground security forces was that of looting.  After troops took down the statue of Saddam on 9 April 2003, looting began within hours and continued for almost a month.  The unchecked looting effectively dismantled the country's infrastructure without any response from the military.  In Baghdad there were only two U.S. brigades to manage 5 million people, so there was hardly any capacity for forces to guard key facilities and stop the crimes.  Frustrated with the apparent ineffectiveness of Jay Garner and the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), Paul Bremer was chosen to replace Garner and reorganize ORHA into the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).  This act created additional tensions between DoD and the Department of State (DoS) and caused confusion as to who was really in charge of post-war reconstruction.[41]  Amid the resultant social lawlessness, political power vacuum and disenfranchisement of the most militarily capable potential insurgents and influential citizenry, the insurgency was born and attacks on Coalition forces, almost entirely U.S., began.[42]

The second and third high-risk missions had to do with the criticality of securing borders and thousands of weapons caches (small arms and not those of Weapons of Mass Destruction) all over the country.  These missions were not a surprise to those who had actually participated in the initial phases of combat operations.  It was clearly spelled out as two of the most important and immediate goals upon conclusion of combat operations.  What became problematic were the overwhelming scope of the security requirements and the paucity of available forces.  Consequently, religiously motivated foreign terrorists and insurgents have had relatively free access into and throughout the country, and many arms caches have been looted, absorbed into the populace, and supplied to arm local militias, religious factions and terrorists.  Both security failings have contributed to raising the level of violence and fueling the insurgency. Although there are now a number of border checkpoints, it is difficult to measure how many foreign fighters still gain access into Iraq through open borders, and it is well known that Iranians have infiltrated major Iraqi institutions, causing more difficulty in the stabilization of the most important elements of the government.[43]

The fourth high-risk mission was that of training an Iraqi police force.  Since the Iraqi Army was disbanded and the U.S. force mix had too few military police forces to manage security, this risk was not only overlooked, but it continues to be a problem four years into the war.  Borders remain porous, and the training of the police forces is plagued by poor training and attacks by insurgents.[44]  The numbers trained remain in controversy, roughly estimated at about 135,000, well short of the goal of 188,000 by the end of 2006.[45]  Moreover, the numbers trained do not fully reflect the challenges.  Police forces are fraught with corruption, infiltrated by religious,

tribal and insurgent factions and, in many cases, becoming part of the problem rather than the solution.[46]

It is worth noting that before the war, the Bush Administration dismissed as unnecessary a plan backed by the Justice Department to rebuild the police force by deploying thousands of American civilian trainers. Current and former Administration officials said they were relying on a CIA assessment that said the Iraqi police were well trained. The CIA stated that "its assessment conveyed nothing of the sort."[47] Also, the report states that "after Baghdad fell, when a majority of Iraqi police officers abandoned their posts, a second proposal by a Justice Department team calling for 6,000 police trainers was reduced to 1,500. Even this vastly reduced number was never resourced: during the first eight months of the occupation, as crime soared and the insurgency took hold, the U.S. deployed only 50 advisors in Iraq."[48]

The final high risk mission area concerns the weak central government, the highest level of democratic institutions. With various factions in charge of the government over time, there has been little demonstration that the Iraqis can assume independent governance of the country. Admittedly, the heads of the government in Iraq have just begun their experience in governance, but it is generally recognized that they need to take the reigns of authority firmly in hand and assume control. The U.S. must let them, even if Iraqi decisions are not what they want, as was the case when the Maliki government told the U.S. to eliminate the checkpoints in Sadr City, a hotbed of Sunni insurgency in Baghdad.[49]

The consequences of inadequate and ineffective initial strategic planning led to a quickly evolving insurgency which began within months of the officially declared end of combat operations. The contentious and changing rationale justifying the invasion has diluted the strategy, weakened U.S. national will, and likely fueled the insurgency.[50] This and the increased sectarian violence have led to admissions by CENTCOM and the highest-level military Commanders that we are slowly moving toward chaos.[51] The slowness and cost of reconstruction, a continuing abysmal unemployment rate, widespread corruption by both Iraqis and U.S. contractors, and continued infiltration of borders has further exacerbated the situation.[52]

Future Strategic Framework

If the U.S. and Coalition partners have any chance at all of succeeding in Iraq, and time is running short by all measures, there must be clearly defined objectives. A good start is, as Fareed Zakaria points out, "to see Iraq as it is now. Not as it once was. Not as it could have been. Not as we hope it will become."[53] For Iraq, this should translate into a minimal level of

stability within its original borders.  Stability would be defined as limiting lawlessness to general random acts of violence not orchestrated by organized large-scale militias of tribal or religious groups that would be beyond the operational response capability of the provincial police force. Beyond a more or less responsible state (one that does not pose a threat to its neighbors or citizens), with a relatively positive relationship with the West, there should be little expectation about what the institutions should look like and how political power is exercised.  The dilemma is that the U.S. started this and cannot walk away, even after elections.  Therefore, condition-based timelines, milestones, and benchmarks are reasonable and acceptable management tools to guide the transition to full Iraqi sovereign governance.  Furthermore, Iraqi forces should be somewhat operationally comparable in capability to what U.S. forces can perform, but already can do what we cannot - act in concert with their social and cultural norms as a part of Iraqis assuming responsibility for their own nation.   Within the dynamic socio-political environment, the latter is increasingly more important than the former.  With our emphasis on kinetic operations, military officers and the Administration are beginning to see the continuing deterioration on the ground with no end in sight.  Indeed, the U.S. may be on the cusp of another major change in strategy, one more realistically focused on achieving stability and self-governance vice more idealistic and infeasible social and political reforms.

It must also be emphasized, as some have put forward lately,[54] that a short-term increase in the number of troops in Iraq is simply not viable from a political point of view.[55]  Current polls show that only 16% of the public would favor such an increase in military forces.[56]  And military action is not an end in itself.  By increasing troops and doing more of the same, we come dangerously close to a flawed military strategy that does not possess any connection to a political end, thereby ultimately failing both militarily and politically and in turn violating a fundamental Clausewitzian theory of the inherent distinction between the two.  Although a last crushing advance on the enemy, wherever they are in Iraq, might do some damage to the insurgency, the operational gains would likely be temporary and could foment greater disaffection within the same populace the U.S. and Coalition are trying to secure.  Moreover, any larger military approach is likely unacceptable, unsustainable, and infeasible politically.[57] Fareed Zakaria emphasized that any increase of troops is not viable with the current Iraqi government, which is now dealing with political and sectarian issues within Iraq.[58]  Other elements of power must be brought to bear on this problem before the situation further spirals toward chaos.

With lowered expectations, a way ahead for Iraq would be to adopt a Murtha-like approach by moving U.S. forces outside major cities.  The U.S. forces would then only provide

police training, engineering and infrastructure support as requested.  This approach allows for the recognition of Iraq as an independent and sovereign state, marginalizes the anti-U.S. elements of the insurgency, and demonstrates our willingness to act as an enabler vice occupier to assist them in rebuilding Iraq.  Moreover, this approach would allow the U.S. to slowly reduce its forces, as the current 144,000 troop level is overextended and unsustainable.[59]

Although receiving additional attention following the recent elections, the U.S. must re-energize its diplomatic efforts both with key regional allies and antagonists.  The Executive Branch has historically been the leader on how diplomatic efforts are pursued and is often a reflection of the President's personal style and disposition.  For that reason, U.S. international diplomacy has had rather an inconsistent and checkered past.  The current Administration, which George Will stated has "raised stubbornness and pugnacity to a political philosophy,"[60] must change this behavior.  There must be aggressive action on the part of this Administration to advance diplomacy, even to countries which have been marginalized over the last years.  This sentiment was echoed by a senior South African UN official, who encouraged improved engagement with our regional partners regarding Iraq.[61]

Such diplomatic efforts extend to countries like Iran and Syria.  As Ted Koppel pointed out in his extensive press piece for Discovery on Iran, this country is actually a budding democracy, not perhaps in an American sense, but with the essential elements for continuing progress.  Its working institutions make this one of the most modern Arab countries in the Middle East.  According to many experts, Iran is poised for development in the following ways:  seventy percent of its population is under the age of 30, for whom the idea of the Shah and Iran-Iraq War is history; 60% of its university student population is comprised of women; there are 70,000 blogs in the country; internet cafés abound; the economy is vibrant, irrespective of its vast oil reserves; the people are active in civic clubs that honor their grand Persian history and education; and its anti-U.S. propaganda campaign is met with indifference by would-be terrorists.[62]   Although unpalatable to many in the U.S. at this time, this Administration cannot afford to ignore or further distance Iran.  Although provocative rhetoric by Iranian leaders (which have recently met with Iranian censor by both the official Head-of-State and the people) and its stance on nuclear programs present dramatic diplomatic challenges, the U.S. should deliberately pursue improved relations, balance Iranian cultural and regional interests and avoid the same blunders that have typified operations in Iraq.[63]

Similarly and emphatically, the use of terms and rhetoric with religious underpinnings that undermine diplomatic efforts must end.  Words like "Axis of Evil," "moral," "righteous," "indignant," "demonize," "devil," must be eliminated from the current political lexicon, not to

mention the more prevalent use of derogatory words by soldiers in the field like "camel jockey" and "raghead."[64]  This terminology inflames East versus West dissonance and places an improper Puritanical and Christian-based imprint on issues.  By eliminating what is perceived as Crusade-like language, it will help end the perception that this is a clash of religious faiths.  This cultural dialectic is often imperceptible to Americans, but can profoundly influence our regional allies and current adversaries, potentially transforming both into lifelong enemies.

Conclusion

The path into Iraq was littered with miscalculations and strategic missteps. As the basic rationale for the U.S.-led invasion began to disintegrate, the strategic and operational environments also eroded.  Rapid victory in the maneuver phase of the campaign was followed closely by interagency misunderstanding and provocative and counter-productive military operations.  Ineffectiveness in four high-risk mission areas increased instability and provided the conditions for growing lawlessness, civil strife and insurgency.  Continuation of the current strategy will likely not lead to an acceptable end state.  As the U.S. moves to transition security requirements and the counterinsurgency fight to the Iraqis, it must realistically establish minimal acceptable exit criteria for Iraq that are consistent with their own self-determination.  The way ahead for Iraq will be difficult and is by any measure daunting, as the latest NIE (dated 2 February 2007) points out.[65]  However, the U.S. cannot abandon this fledgling nation, not only because we "broke it," but because of the broader implications for security regionally and worldwide.  Unfortunately, the complexion of the Iraqi government may not be what the U.S. had hoped for.  This is, however, not ours to decide.[66]

Although the strategy for bringing Iraq to an acceptable end is being continually re-formulated, the culmination of our military engagement is still in the distance.  What we have "broken" we now have the obligation to provide the wherewithal to repair and rebuild.  This will take time.  What has become clear is that Iraq will not be made over in our own (U.S.) image.  Its form and substance will be uniquely Iraqi and dependent on its own political, social and cultural designs.  It has been the intent of this paper to provide a framework for that design, one that allows Iraqis the flexibility and responsibility to provide for their own future while reducing the expectations for Iraq by our Nation and its people.

Endnotes

[1] *The Lost Year in Iraq [2003-2204],* Frontline, PBS, 37 min., 2006, DVD.  Aired 17 October 2006, discussing the immediate loss of control after the fall of Baghdad in 2003.

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War,* ed. and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 128.

³ Ibid., 143.

⁴ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy,* 2ⁿᵈ ed., (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1967), 319.

⁵ Ibid., 353.

⁶ *The Dark Side,* Frontline, PBS, 90 min., 2006, DVD. This piece discusses much of the behind-the-scenes political decisionmaking regarding the lead-up to and invasion of Iraq, along with giving a detailed account of intelligence, the agencies, and the personalities which helped administration officials justify going to war in Iraq. Details include the following: the cabinet meeting four days after 9/11 at Camp David where Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz suggested Iraq be a target, with which Powell and Tenet disagreed; the creation of the "Cabal" on the Secretary of Defense level (under Douglas Feith) for senior officials to scrutinize intelligence for the al-Qa'ida and Saddam operational link; and the numerous press appearances and speaking engagements by Vice President Cheney regarding the imminent threat Saddam posed (Meet the Press, December 9, 2001, Fox News, December 11, 2001, CNN March 11, 2002, and Meet the Press on March 24, 2002 for the press appearances). The CIA continued to deny the allegations, and George Tenet ordered a 10-year review of documents to establish whether or not there was any credible evidence of the al-Qa'ida/Saddam connection. They found none.

⁷ Louise Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (New York: Random House, 2004), 189.

⁸ Ibid. She is quoting the 9/11 Commission Report, Washington, D.C., 335-336.

⁹ U.S. Department of Defense Inspector General, briefing slides, "Review of Pre-Iraqi War Activities of the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy," (Washington, D.C.: DoD, February 2007), 3.

¹⁰ National Intelligence Estimate, "Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction," October 2002, available from http://www.fas.org/irp/cia/prodcuct/iraq; Internet; accessed 12 January 2007.

¹¹ Director of Central Intelligence, "Statement by Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet on the 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq's Continuing Programs for Weapons of Mass Destruction," 11 August 2003; available from http://www.fas.org/irp/cia/product/dci; Internet; accessed 12 January 2007.

¹² "Did White House Push Bogus WMD Claim?" CBS/AP, 12 April 2006; available from http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/04/12/iraq; Internet; accessed 12 January 2007. This article demonstrates the continuing effort on the part of the Intelligence Community to debunk, in this case the existence of trailers used for making biological weapons, claims on the part of the Administration that this was evidence of a current WMD program in Iraq.

¹³ Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, *Vanity Fair Magazine,* interview, 30 May 2003; [database on-line]; available from ProQuest; accessed 30 November 2006. An interesting

point is the continued desire to establish a connection between terrorism and WMD, along with the renewed concern over the treatment of the Iraqi people, especially when the world stood by as  tens of thousands of  Kurds were chemically gassed to death almost two decades ago (March 1988 in Halabja).

[14] George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address," Washington, D.C., 20 January 2004.

[15] Colin S. Powell, "Address to the United Nations," briefing, New York, 5 February 2003.

[16] Dana Milbank, "Colonel Finally Saw Whites of Their Eyes," *Washington Post*, 20 October 2005, p. AO4.  Colonel Larry Wilkerson, Secretary of State Powell's Chief of Staff, a 31-year military veteran and former director of the Marine Corps War College, spoke out in 2005 regarding what he termed the "Cheney-Rumsfeld cabal," stating that "the administration's secrecy, which allowed Cheney, Rumsfeld and others to subvert the foreign policy apparatus that has been in place since 1947 [referring to the National Security Act creating the Central Intelligence Agency and delineating intelligence responsibilities]."   He stated that by cutting out the bureaucracy that had to carry out those decisions, "…we have courted disaster in Iraq, in North Korea, in Iran, and generally with regard to domestic crises like Katrina."  And finally, he stated that if there is a nuclear terrorist attack or a major pandemic, "you are going to see the ineptitude of this government in a way that'll take you back to the Declaration of Independence."

[17] Richardson, 189.

[18] George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, D.C.:  The White House, March 2006), 1.

[19] Ibid., 3.

[20] Ibid., 5.

[21] Senior Official to the United Nations,  presentation to U.S. Army War College students, United Nations Forum, New York City, 17 November 2006.

[22] Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 11.

[23] Ibid.,16.

[24] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 11.

[25] Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs*  (May 1995), 79.

[26] One could argue that Germany and Japan were examples of successful democratization after WWII.  However, the central institutions in these cases were strong and both had some history of relatively democratic leanings.  In the case of Iraq, there were thirty years, i.e. most people had no other memory of a brutal and corrupt dictatorship which ruled with an iron fist. Democratizing a tyrannical society with weak and corrupt institutions was virtually impossible,

but indications are that the Administration did not understand this and dismissed the potential difficulty of democratizing Iraq, therefore failing to plan for any such exigency.

[27] Russett, 23.

[28] "*The Dark Side,*" Frontline, PBS.  Vice President Richard Cheney stated on *Meet the Press*, 16 March 2003, the following, "I think things have gotten so bad inside Iraq, from the standpoint of the Iraqi people, my belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators."  This was the assumption that the Administration used to dismiss any possibility of resistance, an insurgency or sectarian violence.

[29] Michael R. Gordon and GEN Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II:  The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York:  Pantheon Books, 2006), 141-142, 145.

[30] Ibid., 465, 470-471.  A member of Garner's team immediately noticed that the police force "has abandoned their [sic] posts and that their police stations had been picked by looters…"  Also noted, some in ORHA "began to fear that their reconstruction and political mission verged on the impossible."  Robin Raphel, a former U.S. ambassador to Tunisia and a senior member of Garner's team wrote more pithily on p. 270 that, "It was very obvious to me that we could not run a country we did not understand.  We were not prepared.  We went too soon.  We should have waited until we built an international coalition."  She later "jested darkly her colleagues that the United States would be on its knees in a week begging for help from the world body."

[31] Ibid., 468.

[32] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York:  Simon and Schuster, 2004)*,* 150.  According to Woodward, Colin Powell used this expression when warning President Bush in the summer of 2002 of the consequences of military action  in Iraq.  He also admitted the following directly on Jonathan Dimbleby's program on April 30, 2006, that "You are going to be the proud owner of 25 million people."

[33] Henry Kissinger, Former Secretary of State,  BBC Interview, 19 November 2006.  Kissinger provided advice to the Iraq Survey Group, which has called for an international conference, bringing together the Permanent Members of the United National Security Council, Iraq's neighbors and regional powers like India and Pakistan to work out a way forward for the region.  It is not clear whether or not Iran and Syria are being considered as regional partners.  It is the vehement contention of the author that they should be.

[34] Warren P. Strobel and Jonathan S. Landay,  "Intelligence Agencies Warned about Growing Local Insurgency in late 2003*,*" *McClatchy Washington Bureau*, 28 February 2006.

[35] U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Support for Stabilization, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations,* DoD Directive 3000.05  (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 28 November 2005), 4.

[36] LTC Wally Z. Walters, U.S. Army, *The Doctrinal Challenge of Winning the Peace against Rogue States:  How Lessons from Post-World War II Germany May Inform Operations against Saddam Hussein's Iraq,* Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks:  U.S. Army War College, 9 April 2002), 22-24.  LTC Walters outlined the remarkable speed with which turnover from

alliance military units to U.S. military governance took place and highlighted the guide, "Handbook on Military Government" as a key reason why the transition was so swift. Tactical commanders had their Rules of Engagement in hand – they knew what to do as they operated.

[37] Gordon and Trainor, 497-504.

[38] Ibid.

[39] COL David Haight, USA, U.S. Army War College, interview by author, 15 January 2007.

[40] Gordon and Trainor, 149-150.

[41] Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 103-105; 154-159; and Gordon and Trainor, 166-167.

[42] "*The Lost Year in Iraq,"* Frontline, aired 17 October 2006.

[43] Iraqi military officer to author, U.S. Army War College, Fall 2006.

[44] Sumedha Senanayake, "Iraq: Police Continue to Face Training Difficulties," *Radio Free Europe,* Prague: 12 October 2006; available from http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/10/; Internet; accessed 26 October 2006.

[45] James A. Baker, III and Lee H. Hamilton, co-chairs, "*The Iraq Study Group Report: U.S., Coalition and Iraqi Forces,"* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 7-8. The report provides a complete description of how U.S. forces, both active and reserve component, are under significant strain, including those being deployed numerous times, equipment wearing out, and the question whether the U.S. is in a position to respond to crises elsewhere in the world.

[46] Ibid., 8.

[47] Michael Moss, David Rhode and Christopher Drew, "Misjudgments Marred U.S. Plans for Iraqi Police; LAW AND DISORDER: The Training Gap," *The New York Times,* 21 May 2006.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ellen Knickmeyer and John Ward Anderson, "Iraq Tells U.S. to Quit Checkpoints," *Washington Post*, 1 November 2006.

[50] Mark Mazzetti, "Spy Agencies Say Iraq War Worsens Terror Threat," *New York Times*, 24 September 2006. The report discusses the April 2006 National Intelligence Estimate (this NIE represents the view of 16 Intelligence agencies, entitled "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States"), which found that the "American invasion and occupation of Iraq has helped spawn a new generation of Islamic radicalism and that the overall terrorist threat has grown since the Sept. 11 attacks." The report sites that the Iraq war is a reason for the diffusion of jihad ideology and an Intelligence official stated that "the Iraq war has made the overall terrorism problem worse." The report argues that "Islamic radicalism, rather than being in retreat, has metastasized and spread across the globe."

[51] Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Central Command Charts Sharp Movement of the Civil Conflict in Iraq Toward Chaos," *New York Times*, 1 November 2006.

[52] Baker and Hamilton, 1.

[53] Fareed Zakaria, "Rethinking Iraq: The Way Forward," *Newsweek,* 6 November 2006, 29.

[54] John Abizaid, GEN, Commander U.S. Central Command, Congressional Testimony, Wednesday, 15 November 2006.

[55] Robert Reich, Former Labor Secretary, *This Week with George Stephanopolous,* NBC, 9 November 2006.

[56] Robert Schneider, *Lou Dobbs*, CNN, 25 November, 2006.

[57] Thomas E. Ricks, "Pentagon May Suggest Short-Term Buildup Leading to Iraq Exit," *Washington Post,* 20 November 2006. The "Go Big," "Go Long," and "Go Home" options addressed by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Study Group do not discuss the courses of action and their separate angles. The "Go Big" is dismissed by the group's own admission, stating that, "That option has been all but rejected by the study group, which concluded that there are not enough troops in the U.S. military and not enough effective Iraqi forces." The third "Go Home" course was discussed and rejected as "likely to push Iraq directly into a full-blown civil war." So the second course, the "Go Long" course was discussed in terms of a "hybrid," that of temporarily increasing troops by 20,000 to 30,000. The hybrid approach was discouraged by GEN Abizaid during his 20 November 2006 testimony to Congress as likely having little impact on the current violence, curtail sectarian violence, and would signal to the Iraqi government and public a shift toward a withdrawal over time. Although stated in the article that the "Go Long" approach comes most closely to the 9/11 Commission recommendations, the public will probably not accept even a small increase in troop levels in an effort to quell the burgeoning sectarian violence. As of February 2007, it appears that the public, along with Congress, is skeptical of this approach.

[58] Fareed Zakaria, *This Week with George Stephanopolous,* NBC, 19 November 2006.

[59] Baker and Hamilton, xiii-xviii.

[60] George F. Will, *This Week with George Stephanopolous,* NBC, 19 November 2006.

[61] Senior Official to the UN, 19 November 2006.

[62] Ted Koppel, "*Inside Iran: 'The Most Dangerous Nation.'*" *Discovery,*. aired 19 November 2006.

[63] Hamilton and Baker, Recommendations 8 and 10, *Dealing with Iran and Syria.* The report points out the need to engage in "diplomatic dialogue" with Iran and Syria, "without preconditions." The recommendation points to incentives for Iran and Syria that do not cause Iraq to "disintegrate and destabilize its neighbors and the region" and "preventing the Taliban from destabilizing Afghanistan," among other things. Recommendation 10 discusses the need to continue to deal with the UN Security Council and its five Permanent Members.

[64] Ted Koppel, "*Inside Iran: 'The Most Dangerous Nation,'*" Mr. Koppel took a moment during the documentary to emphasize just how visceral the word "raghead" is to Arabs and Iranians.  It implies the ancient Persian empire has no great history, no culture worth understanding, and it is simply degrading.  This was an important point to make, since many Americans use words such as this freely and frequently.  The author notes that, however, after the ongoing analysis of the sophistication of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, this word is used less frequently, as the respect for the sheer complexity of the attacks has grown to be understood.

[65] "Highlights of Iraq Intelligence Report," *National Intelligence Estimate, Associated Press*, 2 February 2007; available from http://wwww.sfgate.com/cgi-bin; Internet; accessed 3 February 2007.

[66] Iraqi military officer to author, USAWC, Fall 2006.  In line with the idea of democratization and how difficult it is to create effective political institutions, he stated that perhaps a strongman is needed (perhaps on the level of Tito in Yugoslavia, to concentrate three very different peoples together) bringing back the "good old days," as he put it, referring to relative security in the 1970s during Saddam's rule.  The U.S. must stand by ready to provide major support regardless of the type of leader who emerges.